

Strategic Plan — for the — **Cradle of Forestry** **in America**



Celebrating
More Than a Century
of Forestry Education



Front Cover Photo:

Students from America's first forestry school participate in a field study (early 1900s). The Biltmore Forest School's instructor, Dr. Carl Schenck, believed in experiential learning or the hands-on approach to forestry science.

CRADLE OF FORESTRY IN AMERICA

Our strategy over the next 10 years



These next few pages will give you an overview into the Cradle of Forestry and our strategy for 2004-2014.

Our Mission: to stimulate interest in the relationship between people and forests, providing a greater understanding of how forests and forest management benefit our lives and future generations. We will showcase the Cradle's rich heritage as the birthplace of forestry in America and educate the public about forest science.

Our Vision: The Cradle of Forestry will be a nationally recognized center for forest conservation and Blue Ridge culture. Its rich historic and natural resources create an ideal environment for interpretation and education.





Biltmore Forest School students examine the variety of flora from the forest.

The proving ground for American forestry

The Cradle of Forestry in America began in the 1800s when George W. Vanderbilt purchased land near Asheville, NC, for his Biltmore Estate. Prompted by Frederick Law Olmsted, Vanderbilt became the first private landowner in the United States to hire a forester.

Vanderbilt selected Gifford Pinchot to restore and manage his vast forests. The tract, which totaled 125,000 acres by 1895, became the proving ground for scientific forest management in America.

German-born Dr. Carl Schenck became chief forester for Vanderbilt in 1885. Scientific silvicultural training came to America for the first time when Dr. Schenck founded the Biltmore Forest School in 1898. Today the site of this first forestry school is called the “Cradle of Forestry in America.”

During the next 15 years, the school graduated more than 360 students. The students practiced forestry’s science and business: tree stewardship, lumbering, and maintaining productive woodlands. Established universities such as Cornell, Minnesota,

“*Biltmore could be made to prove what America did not yet understand—that trees could be cut and the forest preserved at one and the same time.*”

—Gifford Pinchot

and Yale created forestry schools of their own shortly after the Biltmore Forest School experiment began. But unlike these university-based classrooms, Dr. Schenck’s school emphasized the profession’s practical side.

The Biltmore Forest School closed in 1913 because of low enrollment. By this time, over 60 colleges and universities across America offered forestry degrees. Dr. Schenck also

returned to Germany to fulfill his military duty.

Legacy continues at Cradle

The Cradle of Forestry in America is a 6,500-acre historic site within the Pisgah National Forest. Congress set this site aside to commemorate the beginning of forest conservation in the United States.

The Cradle of Forestry tells the story of the first forestry school and the beginnings of scientific forestry in America. The Forest Discovery Center commemorates conservation history with an 18-

Legacy.....continued

minute movie on Vanderbilt, Pinchot, Schenck, and the beginning of American forestry.

The center also has an interactive exhibit hall, the Giving Tree Gift Shop, and the Forest Bounty Cafe. Two interpretive trails, seven historic buildings, a 1915 Climax logging locomotive, an old sawmill, and several crafters—a toy maker, weaver, wood carver, and basket maker—bring the past to life.

The USDA Forest Service and the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association (CFIA) jointly manage the Cradle of Forestry in cooperation with other partners.



ABOVE: A girl creates a birthday card for Smokey Bear. The Cradle of Forestry hosted his sixtieth birthday party.

LEFT: Students study soil horizons in the Cradle of Forestry's soil workshop. The workshop is part of Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE), and international program.



Cradle offers variety of educational programs

The Cradle of Forestry attracts more than 40,000 visitors annually with nearly 10,000 visitors participating in a variety of special events—from the colorful music of Appalachian heritage to the exploration of bogs, air quality, wood products, and land stewardship. Each year more than 6,000 school children engage in educational, hands-on, curriculum-based programs interacting with the Cradle's rich history and outdoor setting. Nearly 1,000 educators, classroom teachers, and interested individuals participate in professional development workshops, such as the *Woodland Owners Short Course*, a six-part series on understanding your land.



During a Project Learning Tree class, a student counts the growth rings from a piece of a tree's core.



A girl discovers the many uses of trees in an interactive game at the Forest Discovery Center.



Elementary school students discover the Forest Festival Trail.

Mission: *The foundation of any organization, the mission statement explains why an organization exists: What is its purpose, its connection to improving the quality of life?*

What is our mission?

The Cradle of Forestry in America stimulates interest in the relationship between people and forests, providing a greater understanding of how forests and forest management benefit our lives and those of future generations. We will showcase the Cradle's rich heritage as the birthplace of forestry in America and educate the public about forest science.

Vision: *A statement which described desired future condition, ideally, what should the Cradle would look like at some specified date in the future?*

Our vision for 2004-2014

The Cradle of Forestry in America will be a nationally recognized center for science-based forest conservation and Blue Ridge culture. Its rich historic and natural resources create an ideal environment for meaningful discussion, interpretation, and education.

“ *The Cradle of Forestry in America stimulates interest in the relationship between people and forests*

”

Goals: An action statement that supports the desired future condition, usually drawn from the vision statement—something to strive for over time.

Cradle of Forestry goals

- 1.** Increase educational opportunities at the Cradle of Forestry by effectively using the 6,500-acre site for interpretation and demonstration.
- 2.** Enhance the excellence of our interpretation, exhibits, and personal programs.
- 3.** Become financially solvent with a reliable, predictable source of funds.
- 4.** Create a regional center for local music, crafts, and history.
- 5.** Gain a regional and national reputation as a “must-see” attraction.
- 6.** Facilitate the development and dissemination of science-based forest conservation education curricula at a regional and national scale using the best technology.
- 7.** Become “center of dialogue” for discussing and resolving major forestry-related issues.
- 8.** Attract major sponsors that will support and use the facility.

Objective: measurable action with a due date that supports a specific goal over the short run (1-2 years).

Cradle objectives

Goal 1: Increase educational opportunities at the Cradle of Forestry by effectively using the 6,500-acre site for interpretation and demonstration.

Objectives:

- ◆ Create an interpretation and demonstration plan for the Cradle area and identify activity opportunities for specific areas and zones.
- ◆ Complete an analysis to identify what additional facilities would be needed to accomplish other goals, considering the existing 2-year plans.

Goal 2: Enhance the excellence of interpretation, exhibits, and personal programs.

Objectives:

- ◆ Develop a 5-year exhibit plan for outdoor/permanent exhibits, indoor/permanent exhibits, and temporary/rotating exhibits.
- ◆ Conduct four additional forest-based workshops for the public, two adult, and two K-12.
- ◆ Evaluate the attractiveness and effectiveness of interpretive programs including the use of the Discovery Trail.

Goal 3: Become financially solvent with a reliable, predictable source of funds.

Objectives:

- ◆ Complete a business plan that includes a

Objectives.....continued on next page



Above: A crafter cooks food over an open fire.
Right: Lumberjacks cut logs with a cross-cut saw.



financial analysis and a marketing plan.

- ◆ Vigorously pursue gift grants.
- ◆ Seek a national landmark designation and consistent national-level funding.

Goal 4: Create a regional center for local music, crafts, and history.

Objectives:

- ◆ Increase cultural programs by 40 percent.
- ◆ Establish an amphitheatre schedule.
- ◆ Develop a working relationship with two new cultural groups.

Goal 5: Gain a regional and national reputation as a “must-see” attraction.

Objectives:

- ◆ Implement marketing plan.
- ◆ Review and expand the web presence for the CFIA and National Forests in North Carolina websites.

Goal 6: Facilitate the development and dissemination of science-based forest conservation education curricula at a regional and national scale using the best technology.

Objectives:

- ◆ Partner with Forest Service Research to produce and distribute two Natural Inquirers.

- ◆ Enhance partnerships with Hands on the Land interagency program.
- ◆ Expand existing curricula to serve K-12 students.
- ◆ Coordinate the development of educator conservation curricula with the North Carolina Education Research Consortium, Pisgah Forest Institute, and other partners.

Goal 7: Become a “center of dialogue” for discussing and resolving major forestry-related issues.

Objectives:

- ◆ Host Gifford Pinchot lecture series for Forest Service centennial.
- ◆ Convene several focus group discussions on the concept of the “Center of Dialogue.”
- ◆ Sponsor a 2-day National Centennial Workshop on forest management.

Goal 8: Attract major sponsors that will support and use the facility.

Objectives:

- ◆ Host four events for 10 potential sponsors.
- ◆ Find three major sponsors for goals 1, 4, 6, and 7.



Built in 1904, this German-style Black Forest Lodge housed rangers who protected Vanderbilt's property.



Students in the first school of forestry in America met in this building.



This Climax locomotive carried logs to the mills in the early 1900s.

Interpretive Assoc. promotes conservation education

A nonprofit organization, the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association (CFIA) was founded in 1972 to:

- Assist in the development and maintenance, operation and promotion of the Cradle of Forestry in America and other Forest Service facilities;
- Further the aims of the National Forest System conservation education program;
- Support outdoor recreation and other Forest Service programs;
- Assist in the educational, historical, and interpretive activities of the National Forest System;
- Sponsor, prepare, publish, and sell printed materials, and to handle, buy, and sell government and private publications, illustrative materials, goods, and merchandise;
- Preserve historical information;
- Promote historical, scientific, conservation, education, interpretive, and publication research.

A Living Document

We are pleased to present this 2004 to 2014 Strategic Plan for the Cradle of Forestry in America. This plan builds on our current program and doesn't reiterate all the excellent work we are already doing. While the mission, vision, and goals are expected to remain in place until 2030, the objectives will change. A separate 2-year Cradle of Forestry in America Action Plan defines the specific tasks for each objective to be accomplished by 2006.

John F. Ramey

John F. Ramey
Forest Supervisor,
National Forests in North Carolina

5/21/04

John B. Veach III

John B. Veach III
Chair, Cradle of Forestry
Interpretive Association Board

05/21/04

Acknowledgements

In February of 2004, representatives of the USDA Forest Service Southern Region and the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association (CFIA) began meetings as a partnership team to combine their planning efforts and develop this joint strategic plan that the partnership could embrace. This strategic plan will be used to guide activities and inform people of who we are, why we exist, and where we're going.

Cradle Partnership Team Members

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